IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 2 and 7 - 18 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof and amend the claims as follows.

--1(Currently amended).   A method for executing a query against a database to retrieve desired data from a database table, wherein the database includes a plurality of ~~networked~~ partitions coupled by a network for storing different portions of said database table based on a partitioning schema, each partition contained within a corresponding network processing node and associated with a partition identifier, and a database catalog accessible to each of said processing nodes and including information indicating data organization in said database, wherein said database catalog information includes partition maps associating table data with said networked partitions, and wherein a plurality of agent modules of at least one of said network processing nodes are each associated with a corresponding networked partition to establish a physical connection with, execute said query against and retrieve said desired data from that networked partition, the method comprising:

(a) providing a client query , including a table name of said database table containing said desired data and a partition key value, for said database at a network processing node in accordance with a user request to retrieve said desired data and retrieving information within said database catalog and storing the retrieved information in a catalog cache of said network processing node, wherein said retrieved information includes information ~~associated with~~ identifying said ~~database~~ table name and at least one networked partition containing said ~~desired~~ data~~base table~~ base table ~~and relating to the partitioning schema~~;

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(b) analyzing the ~~contents~~ partition key value of the client query and ~~the~~ partition map information retrieved from the ~~database~~ catalog cache pertaining to said database table with said table name and containing said desired data ~~information~~ to determine a specific partition from among said plurality of networked partitions containing the database table portion with the desired data satisfying said client query and identifying a partition identifier associated with the specific partition; and

(c) executing the client query against said specific partition by determining said associated agent module for said specific partition based on said partition identifier and directing said determined agent module to execute said client query against, and retrieve said desired data satisfying said client query from, said specific partition.

2(Canceled).

3(Currently amended).   The method of claim 1 [[2]], wherein step ~~(a.1)~~ (a) further includes:

~~(a.1.1)~~ (a.1)   building a subset of the database catalog; and

~~(a.1.2)~~ (a.2)   storing the subset of the database catalog in the catalog cache.

4(Original).   The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) further includes:

(b.1) resolving the partition identifier.

5(Canceled).

6(Previously presented).   The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) further includes:

(c.1)   forwarding the retrieved data to a client application requesting table data.

7 - 18(Canceled). --